

2. TOPICS: *Climate* – the ‘stone tape’
 AND *Earth and Health* – building a safer environment
 AND *Earth’s resources* – towards sustainable use
 AND *Hazards* – minimizing risk, maximizing awareness

Global weather report

And now for this week’s weather.

Here in the lower eastern corner of the globe
Australia is experiencing severe drought.

*(packed, parched, greying dust
begging, thirsting
for rains that never come)*

Fire warnings have been issued
As temperatures reach the high thirties

*(a live spark, a single scrap of fire
takes life and feeds,
becomes a roaring predator)*

Drought regulations have been imposed
And vigilance is advised.

Further east, the coast of Africa
Is experiencing widespread floods

*(biblical tides –
hungry, muddy, deadly
sweep the landscape empty and bleak)*

Rescue teams have been sent in
With food and medical supplies

*(survivors pick through soggy wreckage
for the bodies of lost friends)*

Further towards the interior
Johannesburg experienced snow
For the first time in twenty years

*(strange and beautiful sight
a frosting of white glitter
over red African soil)*

Moving northwards now
As you can see, temperatures in Europe
Are unusually high

*(sweltering cities in summer
their citizens wilting in the unaccustomed oven
of humid tropical weather)*

Several deaths have been reported
Great care is advised

Taking a look at America
A hurricane is approaching the Eastern Seaboard

*(Mother Nature in all her inhuman strength
whips cars and trees into the air
as twenty-first century man cowers)*

Storm-warnings have been issued
And orderly evacuation is advised

*(highways impossibly clogged
blind panic: we cannot control this)*

California is experiencing widespread fires
With severe damage to property and infrastructure

*(screaming inferno
unstoppable, inexplicable, unbelievable)*

Finally, moving eastwards once more,
The Andaman Islands and large areas of Indonesia
Have been severely affected by tsunamis

*(brutal wall of water, carrying destruction and death
how can we escape from the sea?)*

So far, rescue attempts have been partially successful
But the body-count continues to climb

*(the dead laid out in rows in the open air
while the living pick through them
to claim their own)*

And that's all for tonight's weather report
Join us tomorrow for another update.

*(Judgement Day?
from human meddling, human woes
what have we done?)*

Good night.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

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1. TOPICS: *Soil* – Earth's living skin
 AND *Groundwater* – towards sustainable use

Drought

Does this dust remember the storm?
The bruised sky and fierce, whipping wind,
hurrying and flurrying
the dead, dry leaves
The low-voiced grumble and
shattering snap of thunder
The lightning – a fleet violet flare.
Does it remember?

Does this dust remember the rain?
Saturated silence
The first fat, splattering drops
The steamy scent of baked earth and parched leaves
rising under the quickening shower
And then the glorious, singing deluge.
Does it remember?

Does this dust remember the calm?
The vivid, lush green
of soaked undergrowth,
Replete under the sinking sun
as the sky clears to a luminous gold.
Does it remember?

Does it remember?
This arid red dust
Hard-trodden and lifeless under the beating sun.
Does it remember?